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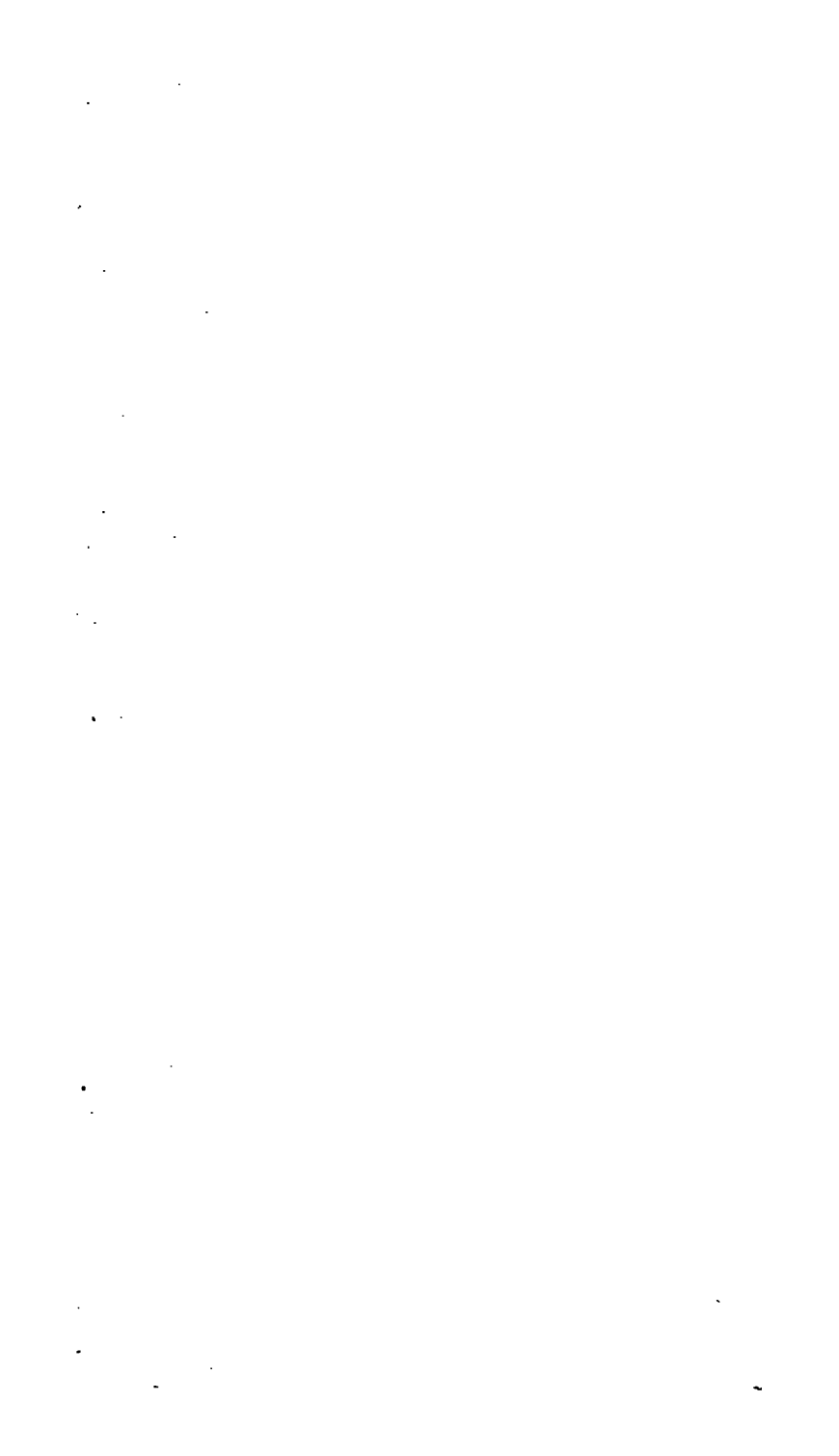
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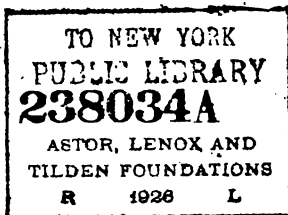
A
LETTER
TO
LORD GRENVILLE,
ON THE
ABOLITION OF THE
SLAVE TRADE.

BY BRITANNICUS.

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1807.



A
LETTER
TO
LORD GRENVILLE.

THE important question of the Slave Trade being again under the consideration of Parliament, I feel it a duty to offer some observations on this momentous occasion.

I have read a small pamphlet on this subject, dated in 1800, and signed Senex.—This pamphlet, I conceive, gives a fair statement of many of the facts now to be considered; and as I have the author's permission, I shall here apply some of his interesting observations, and add others of my own; which, I trust, will deserve attention.

It may be necessary, before I proceed further on this important question, to shew some statement of the aggregate value of the

annual produce of the West Indies,—of the imports into this country,—and the duties and taxes thereon; also, to shew the superior value to England of the West Indies taken in a comparative view with the East Indies and the other British Colonies abroad.

Estimate of the general Production of the West India Colonies, now under the British Government.

	Heads of Sugar,	Punchons of Rum,	Millions of Coffee,	Millions of Cotton,
Jamaica,	100,000	50,000	40	10
Bahama & Virgin Isles. . .	6,000	2,000		2
St. Kitts	10,000	6,000		
Nevis.	3,000	2,000		
Montserrat.	3,000	2,000		
Antigua	10,000	6,000		
Dominica.	4,000	2,000	6	6
St. Lucia	1,500	1,000		
Grenada and Grenadines. .	15,000	7,000		
Tobago.	12,000	6,000		
St. Vincent & Dependen. .	18,000	8,000		
Barbadoes.	12,000	6,000		
Trinidad.	18,000	7,000		
Surinam } Berbice } Demerary } Essequibo }	45,000	15,000	50	20
	247,500	120,000	96	38

Exclusive of Indigo, Pimento, Cocoa, Fustic, and other Dye Woods, Mahogany, Lignum Vita, &c. &c.

Estimate of the Value of the Imports from the West Indies, annually.

247,500 Hogsheads of Sugar, 19 cwt. each,	
price 70s. per cwt.	£ 11,261,250
25,000 Puncheons of Rum, 100 gallons	
each, at 15s. per gall.	1,875,000
The remainder of the Rum sent to America, &c.	
96 Millions of Coffee, at 120s. per cwt.	5,700,000
38 Millions of Cotton, at 21d. per lb.	3,325,000
	<hr/>
	£ 22,161,250

Estimate of annual Duties on Imports, consumed and manufactured.

Duties on 150,000 Hogsheads of Sugar, consumed and manufactured, 13 cwt. each, at	
27s. per cwt.	L. 2,032,500
Duties and Excise on 25,000 Puncheons of Rum	1,875,000
Duties on Cotton, 38 Millions, at 2d. per lb.	816,666
Duties on Coffee, Cocoa, &c. supposed	250,000
Income Tax, Convey Duty, &c. supposed	500,000
	<hr/>
	L. 5,474,166

Application of the Value of the Products from the West Indies.

88 Millions annually to Government for Duties, Taxes, &c.

1½ Ditto Merchants in England for Interest Money.

6½ Millions carried over.

- 6½ Brought over.
 - 2½ Millions to Merchants, Underwriters, and others employed by the Merchants,—such as Coopers, Warehousemen, Lightermen, Draymen, Porters, &c. &c.
 - 2 Ditto to Ship-owners in England, for Freights outward and homeward.
 - 6 Ditto to the Merchants, Manufacturers, Corn-dealers, Ironmongers, Wine-merchants, Brewers, &c. &c.
 - 1 Ditto to Householders, Shopkeepers, and Tradesmen, of all descriptions.
 - 2½ Ditto supposed annual Surplus, which is chiefly expended and lodged in England.
-
- 20 Millions annually.
-

Thus it appears, that the value of the annual Imports from the West Indies may be estimated at twenty millions, which is calculated to be at least one-third of the value of the whole Imports into England from every part of the world, and that England exports to the West Indies, of her own produce and manufactures, and in her own vessels, at least six millions sterling annually.

At least 1,200 vessels, and 20,000 seamen, are employed constantly in bringing the produce from the West Indies, in carrying the

supplies from hence, and in exporting the surplus produce from hence to foreign countries. The West Indies employ more tonnage and more seamen than the East Indies in the proportion of at least three to one.

The vessels to the West Indies complete their voyages within twelve months, whereas those to the East Indies often require two years. The West India Colonies take great supplies from England, and the East Indies take, comparatively, but a small proportion.

No article of West India produce, imported into England, is similar to, or in any respect militates with, the produce or manufactures of England; but great part of the imports from the East Indies are manufactures which do interfere very materially with some of the manufactures of the mother country.

It is also to be considered, that West India territorial properties are all real *bona fide*, saleable, and transferable: that there are no territorial, saleable, transferable properties

in the East Indies; and, although government may find the patronage greater in the East than in the West Indies, the very superior value of the West Indies is so obvious as to render it unnecessary here to offer any more particular information. I will, therefore, only further observe, that were England by any means to lose her West India Colonies, she would lose what is much more valuable to her than the East Indies, and all her other Colonies abroad taken together. Having made this digression, in order to shew by the preceding statement the superior value of the West Indies to the mother country, I shall now return to the subject of the Slave Trade, for the abolition of which a bill has been introduced for the consideration of parliament.

The design of abolishing the Slave Trade, and emancipating the Africans, arose no doubt from generous and philanthropic principles, a wish to meliorate the con-

dition of man, to diminish human misery, and increase human happiness; and, so far as it did arise from such sentiments, deserves that the highest credit should be given to its supporters for their intentions. A benevolence carrying its operations to remote regions, with a view to comfort and relieve the human race, is certainly worthy of the spirit of our blessed religion.—In this very laudable attempt, Mr. Wilberforce has constantly exerted his greatest efforts.—Piety and benevolence, devotion to God, and love to mankind, combine in Mr. Wilberforce. With good talents, active and indefatigable industry, holding a high place in society, possessing fortune and influence, he has through life devoted these advantages to such pursuits as he thought conducive to the virtue, religion, and happiness of his fellow creatures.—In all his schemes, even those who most question their expediency, if candid and liberal, must give him credit for the purity of his intentions. But pas-

sion of every sort, even of the most philanthropic kind, opens the way to false hypothesis, to credulity, to fancies, often inconsistent with truth.

It is now contended, that the great evil which would be produced by the Slave Trade, (were it continued to be carried on *by this country*,) would not only be the encouragement, but the actual cause and support of wars in Africa.

That such wars would no longer be waged were it not that the Africans found a ready sale for their captives to the British traders, who, considering them as property, deprived them of freedom, and cruelly tore them away from their families and from their native countries, with whom and where they would otherwise live in peace and comfort, enjoying the blessings of freedom.

If these were facts—if the wars in Africa, with the concomitant evils mentioned, were to be occasioned by the Slave Trade carried on *by England*, that trade surely ought to

be deprecated by every humane heart—and; I trust, there could not possibly be found one dissenting voice to the immediate and total abolition of a traffic so inhuman, so nefarious;—but here let us pause, while we fairly investigate the subject; and let us not from the feelings of a pious zeal in the cause of humanity, mistake the means of relieving human distress, of increasing human comforts, and by such mistake, subvert the best intentions, and actually and greatly increase the quantum of human misery.—A fatal mistake indeed would this be—and such I dread is likely to result from a precipitate abolition of the Slave Trade, *at this juncture, by England only.*

It appears by the reports of such as have been in Africa, and have written on the subject; but particularly by the authority of Mr. Mungo Parke, who was sent to that part of the world by the British Government, on a mission, for the purpose of obtaining true information, that wars in Africa are

not occasioned by the traffic in slaves with this and other European nations; but that wars have been constantly waged in the interior of Africa, beyond the influence of trade, from the earliest history of the country to the present day; and that the captives taken beyond the influence of trade, are put to death, or condemned to perpetual and cruel slavery in their own country;—whereas the captives, within the influence of trade, are seldom put to death; but are generally brought to market, and sold to European traders, by whom they are carried abroad and sold as slaves.

If these are facts, and there seems but little doubt that they are so, it cannot be denied, that the hard fate of those poor creatures is meliorated, and the quantum of human misery lessened by the consequences of the Slave Trade; inasmuch as the wretched sufferers may consider life preferable to death, and expect to experience milder treatment abroad, than they would in a cruel state

of perpetual slavery in their own barbarous country.

The following are some of the observations made by Mr. Mungo Parke, in the History of his Travels in Africa; and as they may be necessary for consideration on this important subject, I offer them here with that view. Mr. Parke thus stated: *The reader must bear in mind, that my observations apply chiefly to persons of free condition, who constitute, I suppose, not one-fourth part of the inhabitants at large; the other three-fourths are in a state of hopeless and hereditary slavery, and are employed in cultivating the land, in the care of cattle, and in servile offices of all kinds, much in the same manner as the slaves in the West Indies.* Mr. Parke, in describing the misery of slavery in Africa, adds, *With this they are badly fed, and oftentimes cruelly punished.* He also mentions, that the chief instrument used in husbandry is the hoe, which varies in form in different districts, and the labour

is universally performed by slaves. Mr. Parke also relates, that during his interview with the King of Kasson, it happened, that in the afternoon one of his slaves eloped, and a general alarm being given, every person that had a horse rode into the woods in the hopes of apprehending him. In about an hour they all returned with the *slave, who was cruelly flogged, and afterwards put in irons.*

I need not mention many similar observations by other travellers, and by Mr. Parke himself.—I will only, in addition to the foregoing, quote his general conclusion as to the effect which, in his opinion, (as he modestly states) the Abolition of the Slave Trade would produce upon the condition of the Africans.—He thus expresses himself: Such are the general outlines of that system of slavery which prevails in Africa, and it is evident, from its nature, that it is a system of no modern date.—It probably had its origin in the remote ages of antiquity, before

the Mahomedans explored a path across the Desert.—How far it is maintained and supported by the Slave Trade, which for two hundred years *the nations of Europe* have carried on with the natives of the Coast, it is, neither within my province nor in my power to explain. If my sentiments should be required concerning the effect which a *discontinuance of that commerce* would produce on the minds of the natives, I should have no hesitation in observing, that in the present unenlightened state of their minds, my opinion is, the effect would neither be so extensive or beneficial as many wise and worthy persons fondly expect.

With these reflections, I dread that an *immediate* prohibition of the Slave Trade between *this country only* and Africa, would greatly augment the misery of the poor Africans; and that humanity would indeed be outraged by the act. If a prohibition of the trade can possibly be of benefit to those poor sufferers, it must be a *general* prohibi-

tion, which all Europe, and particularly America, should unequivocally agree strictly to commence *at the same time*, and as strictly continue to perform. Should that general prohibition not take place *at the same time*, and should *England alone* commence it, the intended good effect will be completely prevented; and, instead thereof, much injury would be done to the Africans, to the British Colonies in the West Indies, and to *England herself*.

Not one slave less would be brought from Africa. The British Colonies *alone* would be excluded from admitting the importation of slaves.—England *alone* would abandon the trade.—The British Colonies, thus solely excluded, would be in great danger of precipitate destruction.—The sacrifices so made by England to prevent the Slave Trade, would shew to the Negroes in the old Colonies her abhorrence to the system of slavery in general, and the Negroes there, who from the example of St. Domingo, may be pant-

ing for freedom, it is much to be apprehended, will consider the prohibition of the Slave Trade *exclusively by England*, as leading to a speedy emancipation of slaves of all descriptions within the British Government, and as a signal for general and unqualified freedom. The Colonies, in such an event, would be irrecoverably lost, and horrible indeed would be the consequences to the poor devoted white inhabitants. England would be deprived suddenly of her most beneficial interests, and would lose the controul of her West India Colonies;—those Colonies would be overwhelmed in almost immediate, and probably in eternal ruin and destruction. Other European powers, and America in particular, would be enriched by the sacrifice which *England alone* would make, by a well-intended, but fatally, ill-advised, ineffectual effort, in attempting to promote the cause of humanity too precipitately and rashly.

France and Spain have great and produc-

tive territories in the West Indies ; the cultivation of which they are increasing by every exertion in their power. It is not likely, therefore, that these nations will concur in the total Abolition of the Slave Trade. It is said, indeed, that France and America *have promised to do so* ;—but surely, on an occasion of such importance, vague distant promises are not sufficient to induce England immediately, and alone, to commence a measure, which, if not generally and *at the same time* adopted, must be ruinous to England and her Colonies, in proportion as it will benefit and enrich other nations and their dependants. It is an undeniable fact that the French, * Spaniards, and Americans, have received, and are receiving slaves into their Colonies in great numbers, and even the magnanimous Chiefs of Hayti have been,

* See a popular newspaper, July 11th, 1804.—“ By letters from Jamaica it appears, that the Spanish Government have allowed the free importation of Negroes into Cuba, by vessels of all nations, for six years.”

and are, solicitous for the importation of slaves,—not that they may take them to their besoms, and make them partakers of the blessings of freedom; but to be possessed as property and as slaves.

The Americans, it is well known, have begun the settlement of an immense Sugar Colony in Louisiana, and *considerable quantities* of sugar have been already made at Mississippi, and exported from thence to several parts of North America. The Americans also export immense quantities of cotton from North and South Carolina, and from Georgia, *principally* to England; and they are extending, and it is most likely they will extend, the cultivation of these articles by every means in their power; but particularly by the importation of slaves. In proof of which I have now a newspaper before me, printed in South Carolina, and dated the 6th March, 1806, in which single paper I find the several following advertisements for the sale of as many as seven cargoes of slaves;—

Feb. 27.—The sale of the Lugger Hazard's cargo, of prime Windward Coast Negroes, lately imported from Nassau, in the Ship Row Palkies, Captain Cole, will commence this day, on board the Brig Susannah, at Gadfden's Wharf, 10 o'clock.

Feb. 28th.—The sale of the Ship Amazon's cargo, of 220 Africans, will commence on board, at Gadfden's Wharf, this day, 28th Inst. at 11 o'clock, forenoon, and will continue every day from that hour until 2 o'clock, until the whole are sold.

Feb. 21st.—Timney Negroes.—The sale of the Brig Daddon's cargo of 173 prime Negroes, will commence on board, at Gadfden's Wharf, this day, the 21st.

Jan. 14.—The sale of the Schooner Ariel's cargo of 110 prime Congo Negroes, will commence on board of said vessel, at Guger's North Wharf, this day, the 14th Inst. at 10 o'clock. *N. B.* This cargo is particularly well adapted for the upper country, being chiefly composed of stout boys and

Jan. 27th.—The sale of the cargo of the Ship *America*, consisting of 418 prime young Negroes, will commence this day, 27th Inst. at Doyley's Wharf. Produce will be taken, at market price, in payment.

Jan. 17th.—The sale of the Ship *Minerva's* cargo, consisting of 300 prime Negroes, will commence this day, at Chisholm's Wharf, on board, at 10 o'clock.

The sale of the Ship *Daphne's* cargo of 370 prime Congo Negroes will commence on board the said ship, at Venderhort's Wharf, this day, at 10 o'clock.

Is it not, therefore, absurd, that England should expect to put an end to the Slave Trade, or in any considerable degree to lessen the exportation of slaves from Africa, whilst other powers are continuing the traffic ; * and ought not the prohibition to be

* The Morning Chronicle of 26th January states,—The Legislature of Maryland have negatived a proposition for the Abolition of Slavery, there being, on a division, Ayes 21—Noes 31.

bona fide and positively fixed by all nations before it is commenced by *England alone*?

The British West India Colonies being chiefly small Islands, require but very little, other than the protection of a naval force. The possessions on the Continent in the West Indies, which England has acquired during the late wars, are also to be protected by a naval force chiefly. The native Indians there are few, harmless, always friendly, totally unaccustomed to war, and in no respect whatever to be at any time dreaded by the European and other settlers. Whereas, in the East Indies, the natives are very numerous, warlike, often hostile, and so very powerful as at all times to render the tenure of possessions there, much more precarious than in the West Indies, not only to England, but even to those nations whose military force is much greater than that of England.

The West India Colonies, secure in the fidelity and assistance of the slaves, will be

always able to resist effectually the common enemy in case of attack ; at least, till they could be relieved by a naval force. And so long as England could boast of a superiority at sea, her Colonies would be in no danger from foreign invasion.

Should an Abolition Act be passed by *England alone*, the most fatal consequences may be the result. I repeat my apprehension, that the Negroes in the West Indies, may expect it to be followed up by an Emancipation Act, and their impatience in such expectation would be likely to overleap all bounds—horrible atrocities would probably be committed. To avoid these mischiefs, I am clearly of opinion that *England alone* should not pass an Act for abolishing the trade immediately, but should defer it till all the other European powers, and America, concur in a total abolition.—Every constitutional method should, nevertheless, be adopted by England for meliorating the treatment of slaves in the British Colonies ; and I would seriously recommend,

that Commissioners or Inspectors be sent to each Colony, who should be allowed a suitable salary by government, and be appointed members of his Majesty's Council. —

These Commissioners, supported by the Governor, would always be able, not only to prevent any impositions, but to propose and carry into practice, *legally*, such acts as would tend to promote the comforts and happiness of the slaves. I say *legally*, because it may be subversive of all order, and produce the worst consequences, were any measures to be taken in the internal police of any of the colonies, that were not authorized and carried into effect by the Colonial Legislature itself.

Our proposed appointment of Commissioners would have the farther good effect of quieting the minds of the people of this country, who are generally impressed with false ideas of horrible cruelties being practised upon the slaves in the West Indies. It is strange that these ideas are cherished

by many sensible and reflecting people; on the authority only of a very few anecdotes of old dates, considered always as fresh instances, and such as are in frequent practice. How extremely absurd is it to entertain such notions? Enquire who are the barbarians that inflict these cruelties: they are chiefly English, Scotch, and Irish; Europeans, educated in Europe; many of them sensible, humane, and kind, but they have crossed the Atlantic, have changed their nature, and have become cruel and savage monsters! Take any space of country, in England or elsewhere, equal to the West Indies, or any equal number of inhabitants even in London, and recount the murders, cruelties, and barbarities committed for a century, detail them as fresh instances now in daily practice, then put both pictures in the same light, and I think the West Indian will not be found to be the worst.

The revolt of the Negroes in St. Domingo did not arise from cruelty, on the part of

the Proprietors, but from that spirit which issued from the Revolution in France and extended itself to her colonies. She has lost all controul over that settlement once so extremely productive and beneficial, and formerly the principal resource of her trade and maritime power. Should, in the other territories of France, order again be restored, and a government of well-tempered controul and liberty take the place of anarchy, St. Domingo will hold one lasting memorial of the danger of giving liberty to those who are not fit for its enjoyment.

The produce of St. Domingo, fifteen years ago, calculated at the present prices, would amount to near 20,000,000*l.* sterling. The free Negroes, will never attempt more cultivation than is barely necessary for their own subsistence; and this once so valuable colony is not likely again soon to be of any value whatever. This is an awful warning to European powers having colonies in the West Indies, not to be so dazzled by splendid

schemes of benevolence as to throw away, for ever, real, solid, and permanent advantages, without in the smallest degree compassing the objects those benevolent schemes propose.

Whenever slavery in the West Indies is abolished, cultivation will cease. The prosperity of the West Indies can only be upheld by the toleration of slavery; abolish the latter, and you destroy the other. Negroes are naturally extremely indolent, and have as unconquerable an aversion to labour as the Indians. The Abbé Raynal tells us, that the free people on the banks of the Amazon would not of themselves take the trouble of gathering the cocoa, sarsaparilla, and vinella, which Nature plentifully afforded them; and that the Missionaries from Europe found it necessary to put themselves at their head, to oblige them to do it, and carry it to market.

A humane man must regret that slavery, however modified, should be necessary. On

the same principle he must regret the existence of other evils of life. But an observing man sees, in all around him, a mixture of good and evil to be the destined lot of human nature, and he will endeavor to modify and diminish evil, and to infuse in it as much good as the case will admit. Every liberal mind will regret the necessity of enlisting sensible and feeling men to serve as soldiers, or of impressing sailors, and that they should, during the greater part or the whole of their lives, be separated from their most endearing connections, their parents, wives, and children. He will still farther lament, that even compulsion must frequently be used to procure such services. But, though sorry to enforce such measures, wisdom and patriotism join in inculcating the practice. Imperious necessity in those, as in many other instances, compels an adherence to a system not in every respect desirable; because deviations from it would be attended with much greater evil, and of two evils wisdom will chuse the least.

The annual value of the produce of the British West Indies is at least 20,000,000*l.*, the whole of which is deposited in England; and almost every individual in the kingdom is benefitted by it, as appears by the preceding estimate of the quantum of the produce, and the application of its proceeds.

The British, the French, and Dutch West India planters, however, need never be apprehensive of raising more produce than will be sufficient for the consumption of Europe. The French and Dutch Colonies do not now make the fourth part of the sugar necessary, nor are they likely, for some time, to make a sufficiency for their own consumption. Dutch Guiana produces about 35,000 hogsheads; Holland and its former dependencies, imported upwards of 60,000 hogsheads. The French Colonies do not now produce more than 50,000 hogsheads; France imported before the revolution, about 200,000. The Danish Colonies produce about 30,000; of which not more

than one half goes to Denmark; consequently little or none can be exported from thence. Thus it is evident we have no rivals to apprehend in the culture of sugar but Portugal, Spain, and America. The two former already have, and America probably will soon have a considerable surplus to export; and may not only increase it to any extent; but having superlative advantages of soil, &c. &c. would be able to undersell us in foreign markets, and confine us to our own consumption.

I know it has been advanced, that a farther importation of Negroes ought to be prohibited, as the quantity of sugar already made is too much for the consumption of Europe. Let it be recollected that the colonies produce 100,000 hogsheads of sugar less now than they did for many years previously to the French Revolution. At that period St. Domingo and Guadaloupe exported upwards of 200,000 hogsheads; since which they have not exported more than

50,000, nor are they likely soon again to do more. There is, consequently, a defalcation of 150,000 from these two islands; against which I place the increased production of Jamaica, St. Vincent, Trinidad, and Dutch Guiana, which I think rather overrated at 50,000: there is then a deficiency, as I have before stated, of 100,000 hogsheads annually.

The consumption, till the revolution, was fully equal to the quantity then made; and it will undoubtedly be as considerable as heretofore, whenever peace is restored. It is not, therefore, an excess of quantity that occasions the present glut in the British market; but the decrease of consumption in France, Holland, Germany, and other parts of Europe, in consequence of the war, which has barred many of the great avenues of admission to some, and has curtailed all of their wanted supplies. In England and Ireland, where there has been no interruption to the imports, the consumption of sugar has increased considerably

within the last ten years. It is now stated to be about 150,000 hogsheads annually; and the consumption, no doubt, would have increased also in every other part of Europe, had the importation been no where more impeded than in this country.

I shall here digress from the subject, in order to take notice of the encouragement and assistance given by England to America, in promoting the prosperity of the American Colonies, whilst that of her conquered Dutch Colonies, and even that of her own old colonies in the West Indies, is discouraged and depressed. America, it is known, imports into Britain two fifths of the whole of cottons that are imported. The duty is 7s. per cent. or $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per pound weight, whereas cottons from the colonies conquered from the Dutch, and even the cottons of the old British Colonies pay upon importation a duty of 2d. per lb. or 18s. 8d. per cwt. This inconsistency, it is hoped, will be corrected by the next treaty concluded.

with America; but whilst it continues, it must be considered at least as a very improper partiality in favour of America. I love America, I have strong attachments to her. Some of my most valuable, my most revered friends are of that country; but I do not admit that she is entitled in justice, or in sound policy, to such partiality. I conceive, on the other hand, that not only the products of our old colonies, but those of the Dutch, now under the British government, should be less taxed than the products of America or of any other foreign government.

It is to be considered, that although the Dutch Colonies, now in the possession of England, should, on a peace, be restored to Holland, the settlers and proprietors of those colonies ought to be favored by this country, as far at least, as they are entitled thereto by the capitulations granted to those colonies when captured by England.

America, in the cultivation of her colonies,

particularly in the article of cotton, is the only rival to be apprehended by the Dutch Colonies. She may, and probably will, be a formidable rival to the British colonies also, in the cultivation of sugar at the Mississippi and Louisiana. Whereas the Dutch Colonies can never rival the British in that product. The Dutch Colonies, from the nature of the soil, are not capable of extending but to a trifling degree, the cultivation of sugar; their produce is and will be chiefly confined to cotton and coffee. Articles but little cultivated at present, and not likely ever to be much farther cultivated in the British Colonies. Can there then be any good reason for preventing the farther cultivation of the Dutch, whilst we assist that of the American Colonies? I am aware that it is the general opinion of the people of this country, that Demerary, Berbice, and the other Dutch West India Colonies, have been settled and brought forward into a state of prosperity by British capital; for which

they are at this moment, and are likely to continue to be, largely in arrears to England. This impression will be found upon enquiry to be almost groundless and fallacious. On the contrary it will appear by a fair statement of pro and con, of debit and credit, that this country is actually and greatly benefited by her connection with the Dutch Colonies. The whole permanent loans to the Dutch Colonies, do not exceed a million sterling. The temporary advances do not exceed half a million more, and these advances besides being annually liquidated, are the support of a most lucrative trade to this country. For these considerations England receives annually taxes alone, to the amount of more than the whole of the debt. She supplies the Dutch Colonies with her own manufactures to a large amount. She employs more than 200 vessels in carrying those supplies, and in bringing to England the produce of those colonies, which yields several millions of pounds annually.

Taking up again the argument upon the general view of West India concerns at present, I presume I shall not be contradicted when I state, that the many instances of unexampled barbarity and atrocity committed by the black Imperialists at St. Domingo, shew plainly the great danger that would result were the mother country to adopt any act which would evince an intention of giving freedom to people not qualified to exercise it prudently and wisely.—I think it will not be contended now, that the blacks of Hayti enjoy a greater degree of content and happiness in their present state of freedom than they formerly did in a state of slavery. France has lost (perhaps for ever) all the benefits that valuable colony afforded, and the poor black inhabitants themselves are much more miserable than before. Let us be particularly cautious to guard against similar dreadful consequences of revolt in the British West India Colonies; and then, as a friend to humanity, as the Negroes

friend and well-wisher, I should be gratified in knowing, that the Slave Trade with Africa would be discontinued totally, and not another slave be brought from thence *by any nation*, or under any pretence whatever; but if the trade were to be continued by any *nation whatever*, I would, from the same feelings of philanthropy, and in commiseration to the poor sufferers, contend most anxiously that the trade should be carried on by the *British principally*, and, if possible, by the *British exclusively*. Were the *English only* to abandon the trade, and it should afterwards be carried on by the Americans and others, the poor Negroes would experience all the miseries which the uncontrouled rapacity of man, in all his eagerness for gain, could inflict upon them. It is not to be supposed, that other nations, *without any legal injunctions to restrain them*, will be more tender and humane in their treatment, than the British traders were when the British legisla-

ture found it expedient to interpose its authority, and wisely and humanely to make strict regulations for preventing improprieties in the mode of conveying the poor Negroes from Africa to other countries.

This supposition is not only presumable, but it is clearly proved by the testimony of Mr. Mungo Parke, who had the opportunity of being an eye-witness to the fact.

Mr. Parke being obliged to take passage from Africa in an American ship, with one of these unregulated cargoes of slaves, he gave the following statement:—The mode of confining and securing Negroes in the American slave ships, (owing chiefly to the weakness of their crews) *being abundantly more rigid and severe than in British vessels employed in the same traffic*, made these poor creatures to suffer greatly, and a general sickness prevailed amongst them.

It is asserted, that the Negroes already imported into the old British Colonies in the West Indies, are sufficient, with suitable

care and attention, to continue by propagation the number found requisite for their cultivation, without any further introduction of slaves immediately from Africa; but the fact is, that of the Negroes imported into the old Colonies from Africa, a great number are disposed of in other modes than in the cultivation of the soil. To such as have not sufficiently informed themselves upon the subject, I shall describe some of the several means by which the old Colonies have been, and are likely to be, in a great degree, curtailed of their original complement, and must naturally require further supplies.

Negroes are bought by the British Government for soldiers, and several complete regiments have been already raised out of the general stock; which plan of recruiting the army, for that part of the world, is likely to be continued as long as Great Britain wishes to retain her Colonies.

Another cause of drain from the general

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stock, is the supply of seamen for the vessels owned by mercantile adventurers, who prefer having their vessels navigated by their own people, than submit to the irregularities and the caprice of British sailors.

Another, and still more important, cause for further importations of slaves, is the necessity of an augmentation of labour, in order to recruit the soil, (now in a great measure exhausted of its natural fertility) by the necessary assistance of manure.

It frequently occurs, that owners emancipate, and release from slavery, some of their slaves :—the writer is acquainted with one gentleman, who, upon leaving the West Indies a few years ago, emancipated fourteen of his domestics.

It is common for Negroes to purchase their own freedom; and desertions to this country are in frequent practice. It follows then, that a supply, correspondent to these various causes, is required to keep up the

stock originally found necessary for the cultivation of the Colonies.

The British Colonies, however, want very few slaves, compared to the demands of the Americans, Spaniards, Dutch and Portuguese ; and these few for the British Colonies would be the only deduction from the number that would be exported from Africa, were the *British alone* to prohibit the trade, and totally desert the unoffending, ill-fated Africans.

Mr. Pitt was not only eminent for extraordinary genius, for greatness of conception, acuteness and strength of judgment, and extent of capacity, but for sound and practical wisdom. His objects were the good of his country, and the welfare of society. He was generally accustomed to accurate examination of fact and experience, and not to form theories from chimerical fancies. The abolition of the Slave Trade he professed to be his aim, and he well understood it to be the popular desire, but he saw

plainly the danger, the ruin, the inefficacy of that trade being abolished by *England only*; and it seemed evident, that the abolition would not take place till he could bring all the other European powers, and America, to join therein, and to *commence together* the humane and philanthropic work.

I will not offer any slight to your understanding, my Lord, by attempting to point out to you the extent of the evil to the commercial interest of this country, involved in the decision of a total and immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade, if carried into effect *by England only*.

Your penetrating mind will comprehend the ruinous consequences that may result to the whole commercial system of this realm, and will also wisely and humanely contemplate the dangers which threaten the British Colonies, and the great evils which the poor Africans themselves are likely to suffer by an immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade *by England only*. There is great reason, there-

fore, to expect, from your own well-known wisdom and justice, that the mistaken clamours of many well-meaning people will not avail to precipitate you into a concurrence likely to be destructive in its effects to the comforts and welfare of the poor unoffending *Africans* themselves, and to the future *prosperity of this country*

The contemplation is awful! You, my Lord, and all the British Nation, will, it is hoped, consider with caution and apprehension, the dangers into which they may precipitate themselves, by an immediate prohibition of the Slave Trade by *England only*, and not attempt to engage therein, 'till it can be done with a fair prospect of security and success; nor 'till the laudable and humane intentions of promoting the cause of humanity are likely to be actually and happily accomplished.

BRITANNICUS.

